

**Issue 38
Spring 2011**

Environmental Education News

The newsletter of Cambridgeshire Environmental Education Service
Supporting Sustainable Schools

Exciting times for CEES

2011 is proving to be an eventful year for the CEES team.

The start of the new year saw the team leading and managing a very successful three-day national conference on “Opening Doors to Learning” at Girton College, Cambridge, showcasing the high quality provision that exists throughout Cambridgeshire, see p4.

Back at Stibbington, major property improvement works to both the residential and day centres has just been completed, raising the standard of accommodation and facilities for more than 10,000 visitors from over 100 schools who visit every year, see p2.

On a sad note, we bid farewell to Upware Centre (pictured below), but not to its dedicated staff team and its courses which will be re-located to nearby Burwell House where CEES will be setting up a working base in April, see p2.

Eco Councillors Conventions (p2) and Green Open Days (p3) add to the excitement at CEES during this time of change as we constantly seek to improve and update our services for schools.



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CEES News - 1

A fond farewell to Upware . . .

For many years, Upware Centre has opened its doors to thousands of children from Cambridgeshire Schools and beyond, but now its days as a centre of excellence in environmental education are numbered.

The Centre joined Stibbington under the CEES umbrella in 1990, and in 1996 a major property improvement project resulted in the creation of the facilities that are in use today. 15 years on, significant investment is now needed in the maintenance of the building, and its viability as a small "stand alone" centre has come to an end.

Offering a wide range of day courses, the dedicated CEES team at Upware has provided rich and valuable first-hand educational experiences in a unique setting. Working from the base of the old Victorian school building and extending to the village, the surrounding fenland and the beautiful South Pit nature reserve, visiting children have truly 'explored their environment'.

Those who have been a friend or visitor or supporter over the years are invited to say farewell to Upware Centre at an Open Afternoon to be held on **Monday 21 March** from 2 to 5pm. Visitors will be able to share memories of the Centre on this special day, even if they remember only the crocodile!

. . . and welcome to CEES at Burwell House

Ahead of Upware's re-location to Burwell in April, the CEES team has been working hard to prepare for the move, sorting the contents of Upware Centre and planning for the resources and courses that will move to Burwell, all in close consultation with the staff team at Burwell House. Just as at Stibbington, the base for day courses will be separate from Burwell's residential facilities and the addition of CEES day courses will add a new dimension to the extensive provision already available at Burwell House.

Whatever the location, the commitment and professionalism of the CEES team is guaranteed to be as high as ever, and the quality of courses and resources will be just as at Upware. The last course being taught at Upware will be "Investigating Rocks" and this will also be one of the first to be taught at Burwell House for Thomas Eaton Primary School's "Investigating Rocks" booking in early May.

More details of the courses offered by CEES at Burwell House will follow in the Summer Term, and meantime teachers who were considering making a booking at Upware are invited to sample the same course at Burwell House. Bookings enquiries should be directed to the main CEES bookings line at Stibbington on 01780 782386.

Eco Councillors' Conventions

Following a very successful trial last year, Stibbington Centre has recently hosted two more Eco Councillors' Conventions, involving six local schools: Cambridgeshire's Somersham, Rackham and Thongsley Primaries, and from Peterborough, William Law, The Beeches and Longthorp.

Each school selected a group of up to eight Eco Councillors or School Councillors to take part in the two-day residential experience which involved a varied programme of activities designed to develop teamwork and inspire eco-action back at school. Somersham's Eco Schools leader, teacher Karen Denton, enjoyed the pilot project last year and chose

to repeat the experience with a new group of children this year. She commented,

"The Eco Councillors' Convention at Stibbington was a great success and the children have been talking about it to everyone who will listen! The whole event was very well run and the activities were extremely successful. As a school I feel we have gained a great deal from our links with everyone at Stibbington."

The next opportunity for more schools to sample an Eco Councillors' Convention will be on **22 to 23 June**. Teachers interested in taking part should contact the Centre on 01780 782386 or email cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Stibbington Centre's upgrade complete

During the past six months Stibbington Centre has been given a facelift. Major improvements have now been completed in both Residential and Day Centres. The County Council's Better Utilisation of Property Assets project has funded insulation, new lighting and radiators in both buildings, plus a new ceiling in the residential building and de-stratification fans in the Victorian Day Centre building. These improvements will significantly reduce the Centre's carbon footprint and contribute to carbon reduction targets for the County Council.

Funds raised by Stibbington's Greener Futures Charitable Trust have been used to further improve facilities, with new carpets and furniture in bedrooms, carpets in the residential classroom, and interior decoration in the Day Centre. New equipment purchased by the Trust has also made a significant impact: smart phones and pupil response systems are now in regular use, the "garden room" marquee is a very useful asset, and the most recent purchase, located beside the greenhouse is a "green house" for garden tools!

CEES News - 2

Stibbington Centre goes BACK TO THE FUTURE for Climate Week!

To celebrate Climate Week, Cambridgeshire Environmental Education Service (CEES) is running **BACK TO THE FUTURE Green Days** at the end of March.

Schools are invited to book places for small groups of **School Councillors or Eco Councillors** to converge on Stibbington Centre on **Friday 25 March**, travelling there by means of a sustainable journey on the Nene Valley Railway. An action-packed day will give participants a choice of activities from a wide range of themes, including energy saving, gardening, waste reduction and junk sculpture, as well as learning from the lifestyles of the 1940s.

On **Sunday 27 March**, a **BACK TO THE FUTURE Green Open Day** will give visitors to Stibbington's old school building a chance to try their hand at 'make do and mend' and 'waste not, want not' activities from the 1940s, and to try their hand at lessons in the wartime classroom. A time tunnel will then take participants through to 2011 and beyond, showcasing green technologies and eco activities for all the family. Visitors are welcome from 10am till 4pm.

Starting in Climate Week and running into the summer term, CEES is also offering half day climate change workshops at no cost to schools. The workshops include hands-on activities to illustrate positive actions to reduce the effects of climate change.



Gas mask drill in Stibbington Centre's 1940s classroom



Investigating wind turbine technology for the future

These two activities and many more will be on offer at Stibbington Centre's **BACK TO THE FUTURE Green Open Day** on Sunday 27th March.

For more information, see www.cees.org.uk.

Coldham Wind Farm - Visits available in the Summer Term



CEES' Energy Works programme of visits to Coldham Wind Farm had been expected to close temporarily during the Summer Term to allow for Coldham 2 - the seven-turbine extension to the wind farm - to be constructed. However, because the work has been delayed, CEES is once again able to offer visits to the wind farm and associated workshops in schools, all at no charge

To arrange a free class visit to the wind farm, or a renewable energy workshop at school, like the one on the left, contact the CEES administration team at Stibbington Centre on 01780 782386.

A Victorian Mystery at Wisbech Castle

A new day course offered by CEES at Wisbech Castle offers key stage 2 classes the chance to solve the mystery of the vanishing Victorian clock. The day includes time travel to 1897 to view the scene of the crime, collect evidence and interview suspects. Pupils then travel forward in time to work in a present day forensic laboratory to examine the evidence before each investigative team presents their findings.

This is just one of the range of courses provided by CEES teachers at Wisbech Castle. For more details see the CEES website www.cees.org.uk or contact the administration team at Stibbington on 01780 782386.

Staff at Wisbech Castle have also produced a range of self guided materials to assist teachers leading their own visits to the Castle. For details contact Centre Manager Geoff Wilkinson on 01945 585096

STOP PRESS NEWS . . . Residential visit opportunity . . . STOP PRESS NEWS

A rare opportunity exists for a school to fill a gap in Stibbington Centre's residential visit programme in the second half of the Summer Term. Tel 01780 782386 for details.

News from other organisations

OPENING DOORS TO LEARNING — A national success story

Working closely with CEES, the National Association of Field Studies Officers (NAFSO) held its annual professional development event at Girton College, Cambridge in January. "Opening doors to learning - curriculum development in the outdoor classroom" was attended by 137 delegates, including local teachers, as well as NAFSO members from throughout the UK and abroad. The programme for the three-day event had been compiled by CEES with contributions from many of the partner organisations whose news appears in these pages.

The event was opened on day one by NAFSO Chairman, Chas Matthews, who introduced Dr Bill Graham, Director of Farming and Countryside Education. Event Director, Rosie Edwards, Head of CEES, and previously Chairman of NAFSO, then introduced delegates to the programme. With a choice of 19 different workshops, seminars and site visits over the three days, plus four nationally acknowledged keynote presenters, plus a market place, showcase and networking time, it is perhaps not surprising that delegates described the event as "superb", "an inspirational start to the new year", "excellent" and "a brilliant professional development opportunity".



On day three a highly memorable presentation by HMI, National Adviser for Geography, Leszek Iwaskow proved a perfect finale. The high quality of the facilities and catering at Girton also contributed to the success of the event and came in for high commendation.

In his closing address, Chas Matthews complimented Event Director, Rosie Edwards and CEES on their organisation of the event. Every member of the CEES team had played a part in ensuring that everything ran smoothly, and CEES' partners at Burwell House and the County's Waste Education Team also made significant contributions.

A full report of the event appears on CEES' website at www.cees.org.uk.

Green Heart Community Awards



Huntingdonshire Green Heart Community Awards are once again looking for applications to find those inspirational projects and motivated people who have been working so hard over the past 12 months to help the local environment. Entries are invited under the following categories:

- Best Environmental School**
- Best Sustainable Refurbishment**
- Best Environmental Project**
- Green Volunteer of the Year**
- Young Green Achiever**
- Greening the Business**

Shortlisted finalists will be invited to attend a ceremony to celebrate their achievements Saturday 4 June.

The Green Heart Awards, organised by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) in partnership with the Hunts Post, has the aim of recognising the inspirational and motivational environmental projects that have been happening in Huntingdonshire.

HDC wants to hear about the great projects that have been taking place in school or as part of the wider community. For example schools may have;

- Monitored energy use and as a result improved the energy efficiency of the premises
- Designed posters or competitions to spread the environmental messages throughout the school
- Help set up a gardening club or wildlife club
- Created wildlife walls
- Got the whole school composting
- Encouraged pupils to walk or cycle to school

HDC would like to know what environmental benefits have been gained from the activities, how many people have been involved, and any information about the longer term benefits that are anticipated.

Schools are encouraged to supply photographs of their work, comments from others and details of successful events.

Entry forms should be returned by 15 April. So visit www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk for more details and to download an entry pack.

News from other organisations

Education Centre: A better future together



The county's schoolchildren have an excellent new facility where they can learn how to help reduce waste and protect the planet.

The newly designed Education Centre at the Waterbeach Waste Management Park, just north of Cambridge, is now fully fitted out as part of a contract between Cambridgeshire County Council and local waste management company, Donarbon.

Already awarded a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, the new Centre now offers even more innovative, curriculum-linked activities for primary and secondary schools, and lots of new information on recycling and waste reduction for Education for Sustainable Development, Citizenship and Problem Solving. For example, pupils can learn about electromagnetism from a recycled record player, make toy elephants from old plastic milk containers, or see how recyclable materials are sorted from their household waste.

Staff believe their new Centre is fantastic but what about their visitors? ...

"An inspiration to work with, accommodating, open to

unique and new ideas, clear and precise in their teaching" – a teacher from Longsands College.

"Everything provided a fascinating insight. I liked the way we started with the remains of our lunch. This made it very relevant." – a teacher from Spinney Primary.

The Education Centre has lots of unique installations which have been designed and built by the national education charity, WasteBuster. The Centre also has viewing windows which allow visitors to see inside the huge MBT plant which takes mixed rubbish from Cambridgeshire's households and extracts recyclable material before composting the remainder.

Visitors to the Centre can also take tours around the wider waste management park to view landfill, composting, recycling and other activities.

Schools and colleges can arrange visits for pupils from 6 yrs old upwards free of charge. To arrange a visit or find out more information, contact Karen Brenchley or Mike Freed on 01223 815490 or e-mail education@donarbon.com or visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/recycling.



Petersfield Primary's Wheat Project: Grow it, grind it, bake it, eat it.



Robin class planting wheat.

The National Trust's Wimpole Estate and Petersfield School in Orwell have a growing Community Partnership. This year they are doing a wheat project called 'Grow it, grind it, bake it, eat it' and growing several different varieties of heritage wheat. Some of the wheat is planted at School in a raised bed, some is planted on the Estate farmland and more will be planted in display plots at Wimpole Home Farm.

Throughout the year the children will be involved in preparing the ground, planting, monitoring growth and harvesting the crop. In the autumn term they will grind the resulting wheat harvest into flour on a quern and ultimately make bread and have a harvest festival at Wimpole Home Farm. The School's year 6 Eco-Council are assisting with the planning and ongoing development of the project. They also presented the project to the entire school in assembly.

News from other organisations

Paxton Pits Environmental Education Centre



To celebrate the opening of the new Environmental Education Centre at Paxton Pits there is an OPEN WEEK for teachers.

Teachers are encouraged to pop in any time from 9.00 to 5.00 during the week of 28th February to 4th March. Enthusiastic and experienced staff will chat to teachers over a cup of tea and a slice of home made cake about the three exciting new programmes that are being offered:

Wild Journeys: Habitats through Time, April to September for Key Stage 2 classes.

Wild Journeys of People and Wildlife from October to March for key stage 2 classes.

Tales of the Ouse Valley from April to October for nursery, foundation and Year 1 children.

For further details contact Debbie McKenzie on 07734 478475 or 01480 473161 debbie.mckenzie@wildlifebcnp.org

The Great Fen team based at Ramsey Heights are also holding two open afternoons for teachers on **TUESDAY 29th** and **THURSDAY 31st MARCH** from 4.30 pm.



Huntingdonshire Green House Project



Since opening the doors to the Green Houses in St Ives and St Neots at the beginning of November, Huntingdonshire District Council has had over 500 visitors including a number of schools.

The Green Houses have been fitted out with practical, cost effective, carbon saving technologies to demonstrate how you can help reduce environmental impacts associated with running a home.

The aim of the houses is to educate the young and old on

water efficiency measures, energy efficiency and renewable technologies. The houses give visitors a chance to explore and see for themselves these features in place, running a normal family home.

A visit to the Green Houses will give pupils the chance to see the technologies in situ giving a better understanding of how they look and run a domestic property. Teachers who would like to bring a group of pupils to the houses should contact Heidi Field, Environmental Education & Promotion Officer on 01480 388843 to discuss arrangements.

For more information about the project visit www.greenhouseproject.co.uk

Visit Clare Cottage



Pupils working at Clare Cottage

John Clare Trust Educational Outreach Officer, Nicola Day-Dempsey can offer a range of workshops and experiences for pupils both in school and at Clare Cottage in Helpston near Peterborough. Nicola can work with individual schools in developing joint projects or schools can take part in existing projects which include:

Reminiscence Project (Ongoing) - aimed at pupils at KS2 + 3 and based on the oral history of their Parents and Grandparents

Learning Gardens Project (Jan – July 2011) - aimed at pupils on key skills / practical courses and creating authentic Victorian Gardens at Clare Cottage.

Tall Tales - Storytelling and Performance (Jan - July 2011) – aimed at KS2/3/4 pupils and has links to Drama and English and encourages EAL and MENA pupils to develop speaking and listening skills

Poetry Analysis and Writing (Ongoing) - aimed at pupils studying poetry at any age

For more details and bookings contact Nicola Day-Dempsey on 07921 059955 See details of Easter Activities in the Diary section page 8

News from other organisations

Climate Change Week 21 - 27 March 2011



Supported not only by politicians but also by celebrities such as Sir Paul McCartney, Gary Neville and Paloma Faith, Climate Week is a national event to show how we can combat climate change. Schools and other organisations can take part by running an event or showcasing best practice by applying for an award. Events can be registered and found on the website www.climateweek.com.

The search is on for Tree-mendous projects

The search is on in an area which encompasses Cambridgeshire, for the most inspirational educational project that promotes seed-to-saw learning about woodlands, trees and wood or their use in technology, science or the arts.

The Royal Forestry Society (RFS) is calling on schools and educational establishments in the area to take part in the Schools Award in its Excellence in Forestry Awards 2011. RFS Chief Executive Dr John Jackson said: "Teachers up and down the country are doing some wonderful work using woodlands, trees and wood across the curriculum, and this is an opportunity for that work to be recognised.

"The past two years have revealed some extraordinarily inspired projects in the South East of England and in

Yorkshire and the North East. As our Excellence in Forestry Awards move to the East Midlands and East of England I am

looking forward to seeing how schools and other educational establishments are drawing on our woodland heritage for inspiration."

For further details and entry forms visit www.rfs.org.uk or email rfscompetition@boyns.net or call RFS on 01442 822028

Sponsors include: woodlands.co.uk (small woodlands award); Tubex (Silviculture Award)



Sky Rainforest Rescue Schools Challenge

The Sky Rainforest Rescue Schools Challenge is an online programme that helps upper primary and lower secondary students to reduce their school's impact on the world's rainforests through investigation, measurement and action tasks. For details visit the website: www.skyrainforestrescueschoolschallenge.org/

Growing Schools Conference – Book Now!

The next Growing Schools Conference will take place on **Wednesday 23rd March 2011** at **Ryton Gardens near Coventry**, home of Garden Organic. Workshops will take full advantage of the on-site expertise and facilities, and are likely to include Edible container gardens, Composting (basic and advanced!), Running an apple day and Organic pest and disease control.

The organisers are also very pleased to have secured Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University, to give the keynote speech. He has particular expertise in food safety, sustainable food production, the globalisation of food, and obesity, and he always has something interesting and challenging to say.

The conference fee is £100 per delegate, to include lunch and refreshments. Places are strictly limited, so book early to avoid disappointment.

For more information contact: Gary Richardson by email: gary-richardson@countrysidefoundation.org.uk or phone: 07711 069092.



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Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate, readers should always obtain independent confirmation of any details upon which they wish to rely.

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Please contact CEES with any questions, comments or ideas:

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CEES is part of Cambridgeshire County Council's Children & Young People's Services.

DIARY DATES		
Date	Event and venue	Contact
28 Feb -4 Mar	Open Week at Paxton Pits 9am - 4pm	Debbie McKenzie on 07734 478475 debbie.mckenzie@wildlifebcnp.org
11 Mar	Quiz Night at Stibbington Centre 7.30pm	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
21-27 March	Climate Change Week	www.climateweek.com
21st March	Upware Centre Open Afternoon 2 - 5pm	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
23rd March	Growing Schools Conference, Ryton Gardens near Coventry	Gary-Richardson@ countrysidefoundation.org.uk
25th March	BACK TO THE FUTURE Schools Green Day at Stibbington Centre	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk www.cees.org.uk
27th March	BACK TO THE FUTURE Green Open Day at Stibbington Centre	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk www.cees.org.uk
29 and 31 Mar	Great Fen Team Open Afternoon at Ramsey Heights	Debbie McKenzie on 07734 478475 debbie.mckenzie@wildlifebcnp.org
12-20 April	Easter Activities at Clare Cottage	01733 253330
15th April	Closing date for Green Heart Community Awards	www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk
22—23 June	Eco Councillors Convention at Stibbington Centre	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

CEES Evaluation Draw, Autumn 10: Congratulations to the following winners of CEES' draw last term.

A small token to thank them for returning their comments about the service is en-route to their schools:

Upware Centre: Mr Furness of Thomas Eaton Primary, whose year 5 class enjoyed a habitats & foods chains day.

Coldham Wind Farm: Lisa Hatfield whose children from Alderman Jacobs visited the Wind Turbines in October

Stibbington Day Centre: Ben Erskine's year 6 class experienced life as evacuees

Stibbington Residential Centre: Mrs Swales from Babraham Primary whose year 3 & 4 attended a 3 day residential course .

